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AUTHOR Edgar, Donald E.; Clear, Delbert K.
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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of two programs--the federally sponsored Teacher Corps and the Ford Training and Placement Program established at the University of Chicago in 1967-68--whose goal is to train teachers capable of acting as change agents in the schools indicates that they have not been successful in reaching this goal, and that school context is perhaps more important for the teacher than the type of training received. Both of these programs trained students in teams, and the Ford Program placed the teams intact into inner-city schools for their teaching experience. When program graduates' scores on tests designed to measure desire for autonomy and sense of power were compared with scores of graduates of traditional programs in Chicago and Milwaukee, no significant difference was found. However, when both groups were divided into teachers in black inner-city schools, white inner-city schools, and white suburban schools, there was a significant difference in scores, with the black inner-city school teachers' being the lowest. These results seem to indicate that special teacher training programs in themselves are not enough and that resistence to change from other school personnel may be a factor. (RT)

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TRAINING CHANGE AGENTS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CONTEXT

Donald E. Edgar
The University of Chicago

Delbert K. Clear
The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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Delbert K. Clear - UW-Milwaukee
Donald E. Edgar - The University of Chicago

The urgent need to improve education has precipitated a rash of proposals and programs dedicated to change. Some of these are explicit about their goals and specify clearly the changes (e.g. reading improvement) they wish to bring about. Some are less explicit about specific instructional goals and concentrate instead on more global variables such as team teaching to foster change in schools. Two such programs are examined here. Both of them introduced into the professional preparation of teachers special training protocols which were designed to produce teachers extraordinarily capable of acting as change agents. One was the Federally sponsored Teacher Corps, designed from the outset "to encourage institional change . . ." [1] The Ford Training and Placement Program, established at the University of Chicago in 1967-1968 to improve the training of teachers and to assist in their placement in urban schools was the other. Although the findings are incomplete and tenuous, they throw some light on the potential of trying to inculcate particular occupational value systems and life styles through short-term training protocols.

The uniqueness of the Teacher Corps group examined lies in several areas. There was substantially more close contact with the homes of students than most other programs. There were fewer formal course requirements; each corpsman worked out a program unique to his needs and interests. The difference that was the subject of this study lay in the organizational arrangements of the training, which provided that the entire program of a trainee was conducted in the framework of a small

team led by an experienced teacher acting as team leader. The combination of fewer pre-established requirements and the dynamics of the team arrangement were supposed to result in teachers more capable of change than conventional programs.

The Ford program, established at the University of Chicago in 1967-1968 to place in Chicago schools teachers specially trained as change agents, provided "cross-role" training of teachers in teams or cadres and the placement of these cadres intact into the inner-city schools where they were to remain as teachers at the completion of the training. The group support generated within the cadres was supposed to result in the trainees being more willing to develop and try new ideas than would an isolated neophyte from a more typical student-teaching program.

Both the programs have a common reference point -- each views the group as a stronger power-base for bringing about change than the individual.

The intent of this research was to determine whether the two special programs had any unique effects on the trainees. Did they view the context in which they worked differently from those trained in the "isolation" of more conventional program? Did group support give them a greater sense of power?

A series of exploratory hypotheses was formulated. First, since both groups with special organizational arrangements were recruited, trained, and placed deliberately as change agents, it was predicted that they would demand higher autonomy and more active involvement in the control of their teaching context than would more conventional trainees. It was also predicted that the trainees working in organized groups would have a higher sense of individual power within their organizational context than their more isolated counterparts.

Both in Chicago and Milwaukee, comparison groups were available from so-called regular training programs.

The first step was to develop an instrument to measure the variables, demands for autonomy and sense of autonomy. The final instrument provided data on background and training, desires for autonomy, and actual sense of power in the school context. From the difference between demands for autonomy and actual sense of power, a "discrepancy score" was derived which reflected the degree to which the trainees' school contexts conformed to their expectations.

The autonomy instrument was based on the "autonomy attitudes inventory" developed by Edgar, et. al. in 1968-1969.[2] Using the Scott-Dornbusch distinction between active and inert tasks,[3] each item was built on an active-inert continuum which, in relation to a variety of teaching tasks, indicated the extent to which a teacher desired "active" or "autonomous" involvement in decision-making versus an "inert" acceptance of the directives of others.

The sense of power measure was derived from the work of Moeller,[4] but attempted to give the notion wider face validity for this study. Since his instrument concerned school system-wide sense of power it was unlikely that it would have discriminated well among a group of trainees who were not only new to, but rather peripheral to the macro-organization. The instrument developed for this study focused on actual teaching tasks and was based more directly on the White concept of efficacy.[5] Thus, the items reflected the actual extent to which a trainee felt he could control his own actions and influence his work environment.

FINDINGS:

1. Demands for Autonomy. It was hypothesized that trainees slated to be change agents would demand higher autonomy than their more conventional

counterparts.

The Active-Inert Autonomy Scale of 9 items has a possible range of 9 to 45. It was found that the groups varied little from one another, the mean scores ranging from 33.21 to 34.93 with standard deviations ranging from 3.11 to 4.48 (See Table 1). The two "change agent" groups were not significantly higher in their demand for autonomy than the comparison groups.

Table 1: Autonomy Scores by Teacher Groups

"Change Agent" Groups	Comparison Group	df	t-ratio	Probability
F.T.P.P 34.25 SD 3.1 n = 8	Chicago Interns 34.93 SD 3.32 n = 26	33	.517	.6145
Tchr. Corps 34.40 SD 4.39 n = 34	Milw. Stu. Tchrs. 33.21 SD 4.48 n = 199	232	1.443	.1466

The only significant difference that occured with the autonomy scale was between the two comparison groups. Chicago interns demanded higher autonomy than the Milwaukee student teacher group (t-ratio 1.9; df 223; p .05). These are the two extremes, Chicago interns being the highest on this scale and Milwaukee Student Teachers the lowest.

2. Sense of Power: It was also predicted that trainees working with group support would have a higher sense of power than ordinary trainees. The possible range for sense of power scores on the 14 items was 14-70. The two "change agent" groups were, contrary to the hypothesis, lower in sense of power in the actual school context than their comparison groups, but differences did not reach the .05 level of significance (See Table 2).

Table 2: Sense of Power Scores by Teacher Groups

"Change Agent" Group	"Comparison" Group	df	t-ratio	Probability
F.T.P.P. 41.26 SD 6.18	Chicago Interns 43.73 SD 10.11	33	.650	.5269
Tchr. Corps 42.59 SD 9.46	Milw.Stu.Tchrs 45.39 SD 8.81	231	1.695	.0875

3. DISCREPANCY SCORES

By subtracting scores on ten parellel items in the Sense of Power scale from scores in the Active-Inert Autonomy scale a measure of the discrepancy between desires for power and actual possession of it was obtained. The possible range of scores on the ten items was 0-40. Though no hypothesis was formulated on this point, it would be logical to expect that the change agent groups would, in fact, not only demand more autonomy than their conventional counterparts, but would also be able to achieve it through the medium of the group support their training was organized to achieve. Thus, if the special organizational arrangements were working, the change agent groups would, in general, have low discrepancy scores. The data indicate, however, that contrary to this line of reasoning, the special groups perceived greater discrepancies between what they expected and what they actually controled (See Table 3).

Table 3: Discrepancy Scores by Teacher Groups

"Change Agent" Group	"Comparison" Group	df	t-ratio	Probability
F.T.P.P. 1300 SD 5.07	Chicago Interns 10.39 SD 5.86	33	1.132	.2551
Tchr Corps 14.45 SD 5.76	Milw. Stu.Tchrs 11.59 SD 4.95	231	3.037	.003
	Chicago Interns 10.39 SD 5.86	59	2.687	.009

It must be noted that large discrepancy scores could be caused by either of two conditions or a combination of both. For instance, unreasonable demands for autonomy, would have caused large discrepancies because realistic possibilities to meet them could not exist in any organizational. Conversely, low potential for developing independence of professional judgement could result in wide discrepancies even if demands for autonomy were not excessive. Combinations of both, of course, would dramatize the conflict possible between organizational incumbents and the traditions of the organization. This line of thinking suggests very strongly that the specific organizational context in which persons work is just as important in understanding organizational behavior as the value structures of particular incumbents.

The data suggest that among the four groups examined, none demanded excessive autonomy (See Table 1). At least they all demanded about the same. Their overall sense of power was about the same, as well (See Table 2), which suggests no wide differences in their contexts. Variability in discrepancy scores, therefore is probably a function of their differeing

sensitivity to unfulfulled expectations, rather than to extremes either in their personal demands for autonomy or contextual constraints.

As attractive as organizational arrangements seemed to be at the outset as determiners of demands for autonomy and sense of power, the failure of differences to be reflected in the data prompted further analysis. The sample was therefore divided into three broad contextual groups, those training in inner-city black, inner-city white, and suburban white school contexts. Analysis of variance for these three groups on the qualities measured in the study revealed that the school context in which the trainees were placed was more important as a determiner of the variables than was the nature of training program received (See Table 4).

Table 4: Analysis of Variance by School Context on Autonomy Sense of Power and Discrepancy Scores.

	Inner-City Black	Inner-City White	Suburban White	F. ratio	Probability
Active-Inert Autonomy Scale	$\bar{X}$ 33.9 SD 4.0	$\bar{X}$ 33.9 SD 4.7	$\bar{X}$ 33.3 SD 5.4	.75	.52
Sense of Power Scale	$\bar{X}$ 42.4 SD 8.8	$\bar{X}$ 44.3 SD 8.8	$\bar{X}$ 46.7 SD 8.5	6.6	.002
Discrepancy Score	$\bar{X}$ 12.6 SD 5.3	$\bar{X}$ 11.7 SD 5.0	$\bar{X}$ 11.1 SD 4.9	2.93	.05
	N = 110	N = 66	N = 114		

The four trainee groups were not predominantly in any one context but spread through all three. Thus, despite the fact that the Milwaukee Student Teacher group was highest in "sense of power" (See Table 3), those from this group who trained in inner-city black schools were not high enough to alter the significant fact that, overall, the trainees in such schools had a much lower sense of power than those in other school contexts. The discrepancy scores simply reflect and reinforce this finding; there is a much greater

discrepancy between ideal desires for autonomy and actual sense of power, or control over the teaching context, for those training in inner-city black schools than for those in inner-city white schools or in suburban white schools. The reasons for this may be guessed at but our data at this point do not justify any assertions. The finding is interesting in itself and gives cause for concern about the efficacy of altering training practices without parallel concern for altering the school context.

Discussion

The similarity of trainee groups on the Active-Inert Autonomy Scale refutes the hypothesis that those deliberately trained and placed as change agents will demand more active involvement in work-control decisions than other trainee groups. All trainee groups in the sample expected or desired a high degree of autonomy. This suggests that different training programs have little impact on demands for autonomy, which may relate more to youth and neophyte idealism or notions of professional prerogatives picked up prior to entering the final phase of teacher training. However, the "comparison" groups in the study were perhaps not at all typical of teacher-training in general. Both Chicago groups, F.T.P.P. and Chicago Interns, went through a highly academic first-year of post-graduate teacher-training and were teaching as "Interns" in their second year of training. They were all highly qualified liberal arts graduates trained in an atypical M.A.T. program. It is noticeable that the more "typical" group, the Milwaukee Student Teachers, was lowest in demands for autonomy and that they differed significantly ($p < .05$) from the Chicago intern group.

Also the data clearly failed to support the hypothesis that group awareness developed among the F.T.P.P. and Teacher Corps trainees would

give them a greater sense of power than those working alone in the school context. It is interesting that, although the differences were not statistically significant, the sense of power scores of the change agent groups were lower than the others (See Table 2). They interpreted their actual school context, that is, as more restrictive than did the other trainees.

The discrepancy scores are most revealing here (See Table 3). Despite the similarity of demands for autonomy and sense of power among all groups, the discrepancy scores were higher for the change agent groups. Thus the Teacher Corps trainees differed significantly from the Milwaukee and the Chicago intern comparison groups. As potential change agents, the Teacher Corps group was certainly more sensitive to the difference between their ideal and actuality than any other group.

These findings suggest that the change agent groups, fully accepting their role, may regard any limitations on their actions to be denials of it, and over-react even to reasonable organizational constraints. It could also be that the host schools' power structures view such openly oriented change agents as potential critics and generators of hostility toward the school and adopt a restrictive attitude toward them, keeping them under close observation and control.

These data suggest a number of unanswered questions about training teachers asagents of social change. Organizational arrangements which modify traditional training practices apparently do have some influence on the way special trainees see their role. While their demands for autonomy are no greater than those of other trainees there is a greater discrepancy between their desires for control and the actual degree to which they feel they can control their teaching environment. But the context in which these trainees work modifies the impact of the organizational arrangements to the point of

being more important than the special arrangements themselves. The lack of strongly significant differences between the trainee and comparison groups indicates that unique organization of training programs alone is not sufficient to make trainees into effective change agents. Simply because a higher sense of power appears to be a logical concomitant of certain (in this case group-oriented) organizational arrangements does not ensure that it will result. Perhaps greater efforts are needed to train towards a higher sense of power or greater efficacy in inducing social change.

Certain assumptions implicit in both the F.T.P.P. and the Teacher Corps program require careful scrutiny. For example, there is an assumption that a formally structured group such as a team or cadre will give the new teacher more "support." We need to know whether the "support" comes from the team and its formal activities, or from informal, smaller groups or alliances which emerge from it and perhaps function outside the regular group meetings.

We also need to know thether the presence of the newly formed group so threatens the existing structure of the host schools' social context that it is rejected, with a net loss in potential for influence. It is also assumed that group action will follow from, (and be better because of) group understanding. Teacher educators need to know how such understanding can be developed, whether this implies a consensus model to be achieved through such techniques as sensitivity training, or whether a task-oriented approach without personal awareness or consensus on every point will be as effective in bringing about changes in schools.

Another assumption seems to be that a group is more likely to gain support from the system than is an individual teacher. What are the conditions under which this will hold? Will suspicion and hostility be weaker or stronger when

it can be directed at a group instead of a person? Does the group have to have power (some ability to sanction the behavior of others) if it is to be "effective" in changing the school? What power does the group have if its legitimacy to suggest changes is rejected? The F.T.P.P. Program, for example, recognized early in its planning stages that "Part of the group's effectiveness . . . is the extent to which it can retain its problem-solving power without becoming the object of suspicion, without excessive violation of norms already operating in the host school, and without becoming encapsulated and isolated from the rest of the school staff."

This sort of socialization problem needs careful examination in planning and implementing any training program which alters the traditional organizational structure. Our data suggest that the problems may be even greater where the training program is consciously and openly seeking to bring about change in host schools. Perhaps a better strategy for changing an existing organization would be to move in a Trojan horse of some sort to catch it off guard. Openly storming the battlements with newcomers may lead only to Quixotic jousts against the powerful arms of established tradition.

FOOTNOTES

1 Cort, Russel H, and Ruth A. O'Keefe, Teacher Corps: Years of Progress and Plans for The Future," Washington, G.P.O., 1968, p.1

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3 Scott, W. Richard and S.M. Dornbusch, B.C. Busching, and J.D. Laing, "Organizational Evaluation and Authority," Administrative Science Quarterly, XII (June, 1967) pp. 93-117

4 Moeller, Gerald, "Bureaucracy and Teachers' Sense of Power'," Administrator's Notebook XI (November, 1962)

5 White, Robert L. "Competence and The Psycho-Sexual Stages of Development," reprinted in Rosenblith, J.F., and Wallinsmith, The Causes of Behavior: Reading in Child Development and Educational Psychology, (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1962) pp. 213-221; and White, R.W. "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," Psychology Review 1959, pp. 66,297-133